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## **Corneal Sequestrum**

### **What is a Corneal Sequestrum?**

A corneal Sequestrum is a condition that has been recognized in cats, and it is a degenerative process that involves accumulation of a bronze to black plaque within the layers of the cornea. The plaque is dead, necrotic tissue that is often associated with underlying ocular disease, such as corneal inflammation, exposure, or ulcerations. The Sequestrum not only causes discomfort and inflammation in many cases, it inhibits healing, and can be progressive to the point that the entire depth of the cornea is affected.

### **What causes Corneal Sequestra?**

The cause of corneal sequestra is unclear, but they can occur in cats secondary to any ocular condition associated with chronic inflammation. Corneal Sequestra have been associated with feline herpesvirus infection, other infection, trauma, inborn weaknesses of the cornea, conformational problems, abnormal eyelashes, inverted eyelids, eyelid growths, and exposure due to impaired blinking. In some cats, there is no history of eye problems, and the condition is noted incidentally.

### **What are the common clinical signs?**

Squinting and tearing are the most common clinical signs, with the eventual appearance of a gold to bronze or even black plaque on the clear cornea. There is often a corneal ulcer overlying the Sequestrum, and the depth or thickness of the Sequestrum varies the severity of underlying contributing factors and the duration of the disease, as well as many other patient variables.

### **What is the treatment?**

Treatment of corneal sequestra is generally surgical. A small number of sequestra that are small, not painful, and noted incidentally do not require treatment, though there is always concern that problems can develop in the future. Some corneal sequestra can slough off, similar to a scab, but it is very difficult to predict if or when this will occur, or whether the patient will have a dangerously thin cornea after the Sequestrum sloughs. In most cases, sequestra do not slough, but can result in chronic irritation and pain. Surgical treatment involves removal of any underlying contributing abnormality as well as removal of the Sequestrum itself. In many cases placement of a thick conjunctival flap is needed to provide a blood supply and structural support, and/or placement of a corneal transplant as well as a conjunctival flap is required if the Sequestrum encompasses the entire thickness of the cornea. Post-operatively, patients require eye drops or ointments as the eye heals, and an E collar is necessary for 1-2 weeks in most patients to prevent self-inflicted trauma. Longterm, some patients require eye medications to prevent recurrence of any underlying condition(s) that can contribute to Sequestrum formation.